

Story 1525 (1973 Tape 13)

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Location: Senir village,
Silifke kaza,
İçel Province

Date:

How to Tell a Hunting Story

There was once an ağa¹ who was very fond of hunting. He had three sons, and one day after these boys had grown to be young men, they decided that they would like to go partridge hunting. The oldest son said, "Father, we want to hunt partridges."

The father answered, "Wait, Son."

The middle brother said, "Father, we want to hunt partridges."

The father answered, "Wait, Son."

Then the youngest son said, "Father, we want to hunt partridges."

Again the father said, "Wait, Son."

¹An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger sibling. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

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Time passed, and then one day the first cemre² occurred. Then the ağa called his sons together and said to the oldest one, "Now is the time to hunt partridges. Mount your horse and ride down such and such a path until you come to a tree like a tall needle."³ The boy mounted his horse and departed

Then the ağa said to the middle son, "Now you mount your horse and ride down the path to the left until you come to a fountain." The middle son mounted his horse and rode away.

Then the ağa said to the youngest son, "Now you mount your horse and ride down the path to the right until you reach an oleaster." The youngest son then mounted his horse and rode in that direction

The three sons hunted partridges that day. After they had returned home late that night, their father asked them about their experiences. "What happened, Son?" the ağa asked the oldest brother.

"Tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak⁴--and I shot one partridge

²Cemre is one of the slightly warming breaks in the weather that occur in February. This was apparently the first thaw of that particular February, for the narrator says literally, "When the cemre said, 'One!'"

³This might be a tall slender pine, or more likely a poplar, most of which grow to be tall, thin trees.

⁴The sound of a partridge call. American partridges seem to make a sound closer to tuck, tuck, but this is an insignificant difference.

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Tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak--and I shot a second partridge."

"That is enough. You did well," said the ağa. Then turning to his middle son, he asked, "What about you?"

"Tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak--and I shot one partridge. Tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak--and I shot another partridge."

"That is enough, Son. You also did well." Then turning to the youngest son, the ağa asked, "What did you do?"

"Father, I mounted my horse and rode until I came to the oleaster tree. There I tied my horse nearby alongside a stream and I then sat in the shade of the shadow of the tree. I waited and waited, but no birds came. Again I waited and I waited but no birds came. As the day ended, wolves began to howl. Then in the twilight, the partridges began to appear. There were so many of them: Tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak. I looked to my right, and there were partridges. I looked to my left and there were partridges. I shot among them several times, and all of those struck fell, hitting the ground güp, güp, güp, güp, güp."

"That is also enough, Son," said the ağa. Then turning to the two older brothers, he said, "This is the way to describe a hunting experience, not the way the two of you described your experiences." Speaking then to the youngest brother again, he said, "You have done very, very well! As a result, I shall let you keep the rifle you were using."